

Appl. No. 10/049,950
Amdt. Dated November 24, 2003
Reply to Office Action of May 22, 2003

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on May 22, 2003 is acknowledged. Applicants request reexamination of the above-mentioned application in view of the above amendments and remarks which follow.

In the Specification

Applicants have changed the title of the invention, in order to comply with the request of the Examiner. Applicants believe the new title is indicative of the invention. In addition, applicants have replaced pages 1-4 of the specification in order to add titles, as requested by the Examiner. Finally, Applicants have added an abstract, as required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.72(b).

In the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. 1.84(h)(3) or MPEP § 608.02 because the cross-hatching of the insulative parts indicate a metallic material. Applicant's have submitted new drawings so that the cross hatching of the insulative parts, shown in the section views of Figures 4A, 4B and 4C, now properly indicate non-conductive material, as requested by the Examiner.

In the Claims

The Examiner objected to claim 1 for not being in desired paragraph format. Applicants have amended claim 1 in order to overcome this objection. In claim 1, applicants have also corrected the problem of antecedent basis relating to the claim limitation "multiplicity of contact elements" by deleting the first occurrence of the limitation. Accordingly, applicants believe the rejection to claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is now traversed.

Also, applicants have amended claim 13 in order to correct grammatically awkward language. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection to this claim in light of this amendment.

Claims 1-6, 9-10, 12, 16-17, 19-20 and 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Pope et al. In addition, the Examiner has stated that claims 7-8, 11, 13-15, 18, 21 and 25-27 each include allowable subject matter.

In rejecting claim 1, the Examiner asserts that Pope discloses an electrical connector with contact elements (14) and one or more modules (10, 11) comprising a contact support (19) with the contact elements connected to the support (fig. 3) and extending along its surface (fig. 2). The Examiner also asserts that Pope discloses that the contact elements and supports are connected in a non-releasable manner (fig 3a). Applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion.

Pope teaches that the contact element 14 comprises a contact portion 80 (Fig. 7) provided with projections 88 extending outward from opposite edges. The projections are included in the contact portion to perform frictionally locking engagement with the walls of the opening 22 to hold the contact element 14 in the base or top wall of the socket or plug. (See Pope, column 6, lines 5 – 15). As shown in Figure 8, the active contact 15 includes similar projections 88 in order to frictionally engage the opposing sides of the openings 24. Applicant believes that this described frictional engagement does not satisfy the limitation that the contact elements be joined to the contact support in a non-releasable manner, as set forth in claim 1.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the contact elements are affixed to the contact support via injection molding. This manner of affixing the contact elements to the support provides for a non-releasable connection, as is set forth in claim 1.

The limitations of claim 1 cover a non-releasable connection between the elements and the support resulting in a permanent connection between these components. The frictional engagement taught by Pope does not satisfy this claim limitation. A frictional engagement provides for the connection between the two joined components to remain until a force sufficient to overcome the static friction between the two components is provided. The application of a force of sufficient magnitude allows one to overcome the frictional engagement and separate the components. Accordingly, in the invention of Pope, application of a force of sufficient magnitude will allow one to release the contact elements from the contact support. Thus, Pope does not teach a contact element secured to a contact support in a non-releasable fashion, as required by claim 1.

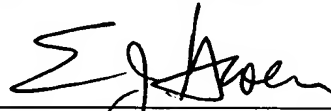
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Applicants believe claim 1, as amended to overcome the objections of the Examiner and to comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, is not anticipated by Pope, since Pope does not teach non-releasable connection between the contact elements and the contact support. Instead, Pope teaches a frictional engagement between these two components, which allows the components to be released. Accordingly, applicants believe claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Further, as all pending claims depend from claim 1, applicants believe all pending claims are allowable.

In Summary

An earnest attempt has been made to respond fully to the Office Action mailed May 22, 2003. Applicants now believe the application is in condition for allowance and request passage thereof. If necessary to effect a timely response, please consider this paper a request for an extension of time, and charge any shortages in fees, or apply any overpayment credits, to Baker & Daniels' Deposit Account No. 02-0387 (72262.90023). However, please do not include the payment of issue fees.

Respectfully submitted,

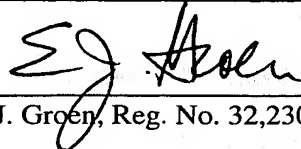


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Date



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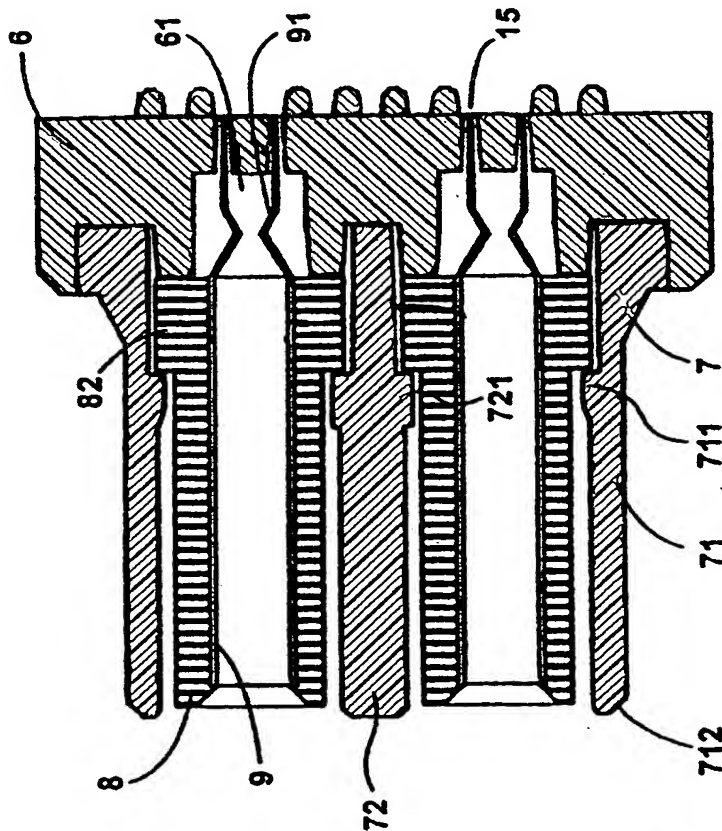


FIG 4B

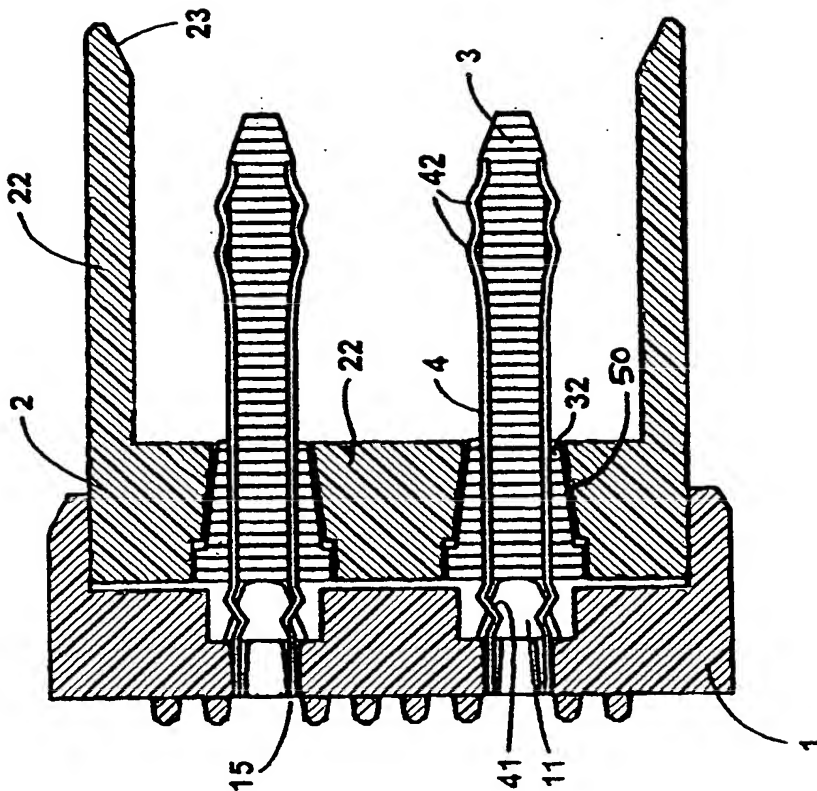


FIG 4A

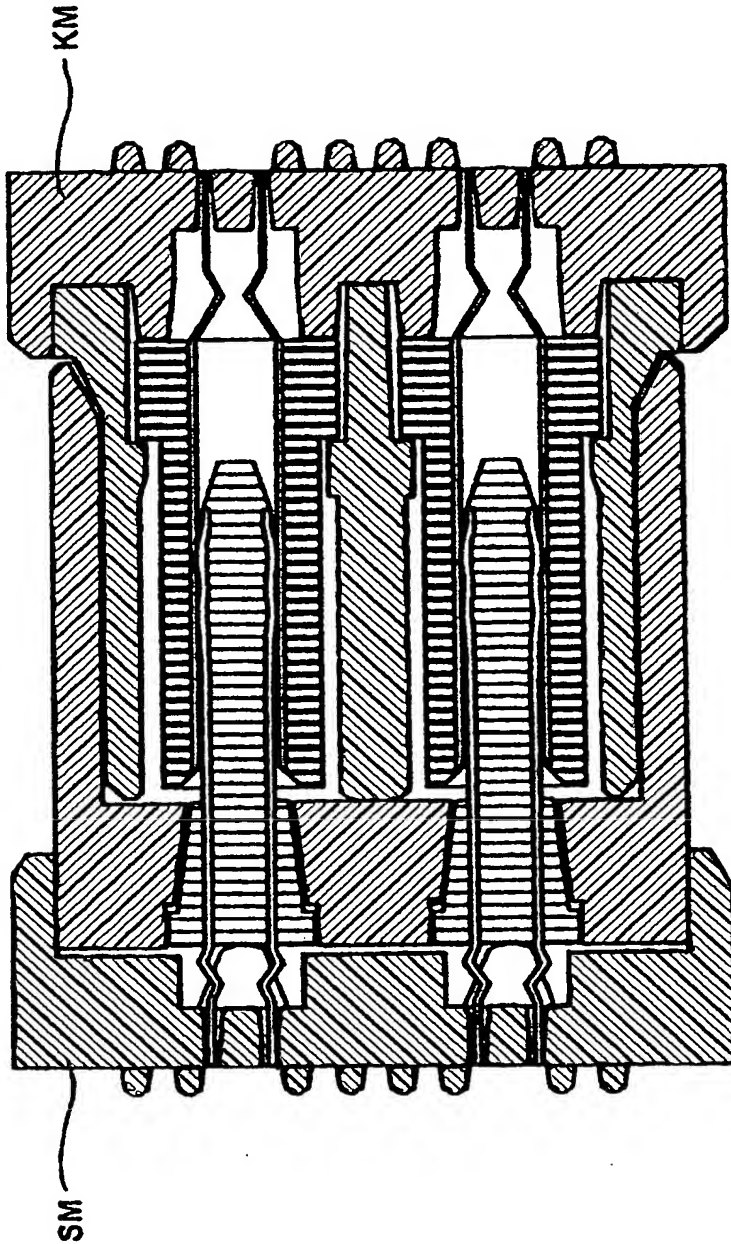


FIG 4C